

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only

received

date entered

JUN 2 1983

1. Name

historic

NA

and/or common

Chadron State College Historic Buildings ^{TR} thematic group (DW03-89)

2. Location

street & number 10th and Main Streets

NA not for publication

city, town

Chadron

NA vicinity of

state

Nebraska

code

031

county

Dawes

code 045

3. Classification

Category

☐ district☐ building(s)☐ structure☐ site☐ object☒ thematic group

Ownership

☒ public☐ private☐ both

Public Acquisition

NA in process

☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied☐ unoccupied☐ work in progress

Accessible

☐ yes: restricted☒ yes: unrestricted☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture☐ commercial☒ educational☐ entertainment☐ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☐ private residence☐ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name

Chadron State College, Office of the President

street & number 10th and Main Streets

city, town

Chadron

NA vicinity of

state Nebraska 69337

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Clerk

street & number Dawes County Courthouse

city, town

Chadron

state Nebraska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date

On-going

☐ federal☒ state☐ county☐ local

depository for survey records Nebraska State Historical Society

city, town

Lincoln

state Nebraska

7. Description

Condition

☒ excellent ☒ deteriorated
☒ good ☒ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

☒ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date ☒ NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

This nomination is primarily recognizing the educational contribution of Chadron State College to the state of Nebraska. Chadron State, which was organized as the Northwest Nebraska Normal school, was and is the state's primary educational institution in the western half of the state. It was established as the teacher-training normal school for that portion of the state in 1911, after consideration of several other towns in Nebraska's Panhandle. No private colleges exist in Nebraska's Panhandle to rival it in importance. Architectural significance is a secondary area of importance.

The five buildings (Women's Dormitory, Gymnasium, Library, Women's Hall, and Crites Hall) nominated as the historic buildings of Chadron State College are those structures from the first twenty-seven years of the school's existence which have survived without serious exterior alteration. The college was established in 1911, and the buildings are from the founding years of the 1910's, '20's, and '30's. The college has experienced two building construction periods. These structures reflect the eligible properties from the first period, 1911-1938. No buildings were erected from 1938 until 1953, then eighteen buildings were constructed in the second phase, 1953-1972.

These five buildings are similar in height (two or three stories), form (rectangular), workmanship, and material (brick), but vary in architectural style and use (dormitories, library, and gymnasium). The architectural styles of the buildings reflect the influence of the popular styles of the time: Prairie style, classicism, and Art Deco. Although the buildings are related in history and time, their location on the campus does not constitute a district, so they are nominated as a thematic group. Their integrity is excellent; few, if any, exterior changes have been made. Two extant structures of this period are not included because of alterations: the Administration Building and Hildreth Hall.

Chadron State College is located on the southern boundary of the city of Chadron (1980 population 5972), Dawes County, in the northern part of Nebraska's Panhandle. The location in the Panhandle is important to its history as the only state-supported college in the western half of Nebraska. The southern boundary of the campus borders the scenic Pine Ridge, which is part of the Nebraska National Forest.

The physical description of each building is addressed below in the form of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS); a brief discussion follows each description. The location of each building is best explained on the accompanying four maps; the buildings do not have separate addresses. The property owner is the same as listed in number four.

1. WOMEN'S DORMITORY (now SPARKS HALL).

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of the north-south half section line of section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 500 feet to this building. (See also p. 8).

UTM: E663500 N4742510.

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Acreage: less than one.

Wood frame with red brick veneer; rectangular form; two stories with raised basement; hipped roof with three hipped dormers each on front and rear and one hipped dormer on each end; symmetrical arrangement of front (north) facade with projecting central bay, emphasized by a one-story covered porch; prominent overhanging eaves with large brackets; white stone watertable and stringcourse at the base of the second-story windows; 1914; removal of porch roof railing is the only alteration; Alfred W. Woods, Lincoln, architect.

Built as a women's dormitory, Sparks Hall was the second building erected on the campus. It served this purpose until 1932 or 1933 when Edna Work Hall was completed as the new women's dormitory. At that time this building became the men's dormitory, and received its new name of Sparks Hall, named in honor of the college's first president, Joseph Sparks. In 1938 it was remodeled into apartments for faculty and married students, the purpose it still serves. Sparks Hall is a simplified, vernacular product of a Georgian Revival form with Prairie School details. The rectangular plan, minimum of projections, strictly symmetrical facade, hipped roof, projecting central portion of the facade, and rectangular, double-hung windows reflect the Georgian Revival from the building. The main decorative element of the structure is the broad eaves and ornate brackets on the roof, dormers, and porch, which considerably lighten the plain walls and provide a Prairie School feeling. Other Prairie School elements are the horizontal emphasis in the prominent stone water-table and stringcourse and the large porch. A striking feature of the building is the use of color - with red brick walls and white stone trim.

Joseph Sparks, for whom Sparks Hall is named, was the first president of the college. He was appointed on June 15, 1910, the same day that the State Board of Education met in Chadron and selected the site of the first building. Sparks graduated from Nebraska Central College at Central City (a private institution, now defunct) in 1890. He served as city superintendent of schools in Greeley, Orleans, Fairmont, and Aurora, before his appointment as deputy in the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1905. While in that office, he sat on the committee of examiners for teachers' life certificates and had charge of the examinations for county teachers' certificates. This experience made him well qualified for the task of initiating a program of teacher education.

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2. GYMNASIUM (now MILLER HALL).

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of the north-south half section line of Section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 850 feet to this building. (See also p. 8).

UTM: E663320 N4742450.

Acreage: less than one.

Brick wall material; rectangular form; three stories and two-story side wings; flat roof; two main entrances placed at each end of the north (main) facade, stone door surrounds with stylized pediment, paired windows; decorative rectangular brickwork with white stone corner-blocks between floors; 1920; windows and doors have been replaced, though the window matches the original one-over-one lights; J. C. Stitt, Norfolk, architect.

A gymnasium was a new building type in western Nebraska in the year 1920. This is the first of its type currently known in the area and was the third building erected on the campus.

"In its early years, the gym was the only building in western Nebraska devoted exclusively to a physical education program. Basketball tournaments were held to accommodate area high school teams. It served as a community building where many functions were held, such as conventions, meetings, celebrations, produce shows, poultry shows, and a circus - complete with elephant. Miller Hall still houses gymnastic equipment and classrooms."

An indoor swimming pool was a "delightful luxury," although it is no longer useable. The building continues to serve certain elements of the physical education program.

Architecturally, the gymnasium is a simple brick building with hints of classicism in the form and architectural details. The flat roof with parapet, rectangular central block with shorter side wings, and stone door surrounds all reflect classical influences. The architect, James C. Stitt, used a simplified classical form to house an unusual function - a gymnasium. Classicism in public buildings was typical of the City Beautiful movement in the first part of the 20th century.

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3. LIBRARY (now MEDIA CENTER).

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of the north-south half-section line of Section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 400 feet, then west 600 feet, to this building. (See also p. 8).

UTM: E663320 N4742550.

Acreage: less than one.

Brick wall material; rectangular form with centered extension in front and rear; one story with raised basement; hipped tile roof with hipped extensions at front and rear; front entrance flanked by Doric columns and topped with a pediment; four nine-over-nine windows on each side of the entrance and seven such windows on the north and south ends; 1929; a new door has been installed; J. C. Stitt, Norfolk, architect.

The form and style of the Library reflect typical recommendations of professional librarians and the Carnegie Corporation in the first quarter of the 20th century. The one-story-with-raised basement form was recommended by the Carnegie Corporation as the most economical building shape, because two floors of useable space were possible without constructing a two-story building. It is interesting that this form was used in a college library, for the Carnegie Corporation had recommended a basement for a community meeting room and lecture space. A typical Carnegie library floorplan is represented here with one large reading room, a vestibule in the projecting center pavilion, and the bookstack and librarian's room in the rear projection. Most Carnegie libraries are noted for their minimal decorative details and for choosing a style simple in nature, such as Georgian or Neo-Classical Revival, where a few details are needed. The few classical details of the Chadron library reflect this mode: a simple stone cornice symmetrical facade, hipped tile roof, and columns and pediment surrounding the door.²

The building served as the library until 1966 when a new structure was built. It now houses the Media Center, where the print shop and educational television studios are located. The college administration has noted the appropriateness of using this building as a college museum, if funds are ever available.

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4. WOMEN'S HALL (now EDNA WORK HALL).

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of north-south half-section line of Section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 200 feet, then west 600 feet, to this building. (See also p. 8).

UTM: E66330 N4742600.

Acreage: less than one.

Brick wall material; rectangular form; three stories plus basement; flat roof; five-part front facade with slightly projecting end and center pavilions; center pavilion emphasized with gabled parapet, "1932" plaque, pilasters, and prominent stone entrance with "Women's Hall" above the door; three-story pilasters topped with palmettes highlight the end pavilions; nine-over-nine double-hung sash windows on first floor, six-over-six windows on upper ones; reticulated brickwork in the parapet; 1932; 1960 addition to the rear; P.W.A. Art Deco; Arthur D. Baker, Grand Island, architect.

Architectural Historian David Gebhard described this architectural style popular in the Great Plains and Midwest in the 1930's as an international stripped Classicism with Art Deco details, which is associated with P.W.A. buildings. The symmetrical brick buildings had a minimum of classical or Art Deco details, just enough to give a hint of historicism and familiarity to a modern building. Women's Hall (1932) and Crites Hall (1938) both closely follow this stylistic vocabulary. The five-part front facade, paired windows and slighted projecting end and center pavilions are decidedly classical in inspiration. The few details, such as the multi-story pilasters, are typical Art Deco motifs in this type of structure. The Art Deco details in the Women's Hall are the pilasters and the curved reeding flanking the entrance. The younger Crites Hall is more overtly Art Deco in the center pavilion details: multi-paned casement windows with extension above, fluted chevron extending above parapet, and wide fluted pilasters cut off bluntly at the top.

Edna E. Work (1881-1950) served as Dean of Women from 1916 until 1947. She was closely involved in the planning and interior design of Women's Hall, which was later named in her honor. She was born and raised in Hastings, Nebraska. Her A.B. degree was awarded from Doane College, Crete, and her master's degree from Columbia University, New York City. Advanced studies were also undertaken at the University of Chicago. Her teaching experience included the Hastings public schools and the American schools of Cananea Sonora, Mexico, where she served as elementary teacher and principal. She came to Chadron as the principal of Chadron Prep, but was immediately assigned to the position of

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Dean of Women. She saw the school grow from its early years to a well-established four-year college.

✓
5. CRITES HALL.

VBD: Beginning at the intersection of north-south half-section line of Section 20, Township 33 N, Range 48 W, with the corporation line of the City of Chadron, proceed south 200 feet, then east 50 feet to the building. (See also p. 8).

UTM: E663470 N4742580.

Acreage: less than one.

Brick wall material; rectangular plan; three stories and raised basement; flat roof; five-part front facade with slightly projecting center and end pavilions; paired windows of six-over-six double-hung sash type; end pavilions with three-story fluted pilasters topped by palmettes; reticulated brickwork in the parapet; Art Deco windows, pilasters, chevron at parapet in the center pavilion; 1938; P.W.A. Art Deco; Gordon Shattuck, Grand Island, architect.

Crites Hall was the first dormitory built for men at Chadron. Today offices are housed on first floor and the residence hall is above. For a discussion of the architectural style, see above under #4 Edna Work Hall.

Edwin D. Crites (1884-1953) was a Chadron attorney who as a member of the State Normal Board from 1931 to 1953 contributed to the support of Chadron State College. Crites was part of the first generation raised in north-western Nebraska. Born in Plattsmouth, Nebraska, his family moved to the Chadron area in 1888 where his father worked in the land office and four years later, opened a law office. Crites was educated in Chadron and at the University of Nebraska, and was admitted to the bar in 1908. His entire career took place in Chadron. At various times he was in partnership with his father, his brother, and his nephew. From 1908-1918, he served as Dawes County Attorney. Crites also had many business and social associations in Chadron, and was instrumental in the organization and construction of Chadron Municipal Hospital. In 1931 he was appointed to the State Normal Board upon which he served for twenty-three years and as president for part of that time. His obituary described him as "one of Chadron's foremost business and professional men."

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¹Jo Haslow, Administrative Assistant, Chadron State College, "History of Chadron State College and Buildings," MS. 1981, p. 2.

²Bowers & Klingensmith, "A Survey of Public Libraries in Iowa, 1870-1940," MS. 1980.

³David Gebhard, introduction in Tulsa Art Deco: An Architectural Era, 1925-1942. Tulsa, Oklahoma: The Junior League of Tulsa, Inc., 1980, pp. 15-26.

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Description

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Addendum to the verbal boundary description, added August 15, 1983:

The nominated area extends ten feet from the foundations of each building.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

1914; 1920; 1929;

Specific dates	1932; 1938	Builder/Architect	NA
-----------------------	------------	--------------------------	----

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Chadron State College Historic Buildings are significant to western Nebraska in the field of education as the only college in that portion of the state. Its effect on primary and secondary education is also considerable, because it is the only teacher training school in that area. The architectural styles of the five buildings reflect popular vocabularies at the time of their construction (Georgian Revival, Prairie School, Classicism, and Art Deco) and are locally significant to Chadron and the area. The similar Art Deco dormitories (Women's Hall and Crites Hall) are the most interesting buildings, architecturally, for the use of that style in Nebraska.

Education

In the field of education, Chadron State College has made an important contribution to the state as the only educational institution offering six years of college instruction in the western half of Nebraska and the only state-supported college in the same area. The college was organized in 1910 as a normal school to assist in filling the considerable need for teachers in the growing state.¹ The Nebraska Legislature in 1909 provided an appropriation for a state normal school in the northwestern section. The Board of Education of State Normal Schools selected Chadron, and the city donated 80 acres of land and the former Congregational Academy building for the new school. The first name of the school was Northwest Nebraska State Normal. Teacher training has always been the primary purpose of the college; however, in 1949 a program leading to a liberal arts degree was started. Graduate programs in education were first offered in the 1950's. The current enrollment is about 2,000 students.

The Chadron school was the last organized of the four state normal schools. The need for school teachers was so great in the early 20th century that three of the four normal schools were authorized by the Nebraska Legislature between 1903 and 1909: Kearney in 1903, Wayne in 1909, and Chadron in 1909. The oldest school, Peru State College in Peru, was granted a charter by the Territorial Legislature in 1860. The Chadron school served the largest area and is located in one of the least populated portions of the state.

Three of the buildings were later named for prominent people from the early history of Chadron State College. Joseph Sparks and Edna E. Work were educators from the first years of the school who served as president and dean of women, respectively. Edwin D. Crites served on the State Normal Board and assisted in establishing funds for Work Hall and Crites Hall.

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Architecture

Architectural significance is a secondary area of importance. Architecturally, the stylistic interpretations of these buildings and their age are important in their context of Chadron and the northern Panhandle. This is one of the younger settlement areas of the state: Chadron was founded in 1885, and the college is the youngest in the state system. The buildings are important to the architectural history of Chadron, the area, and, in some cases, the state.

The architectural styles are not common in the area. The Women's Dormitory (Sparks Hall) is a simple vernacular form of the Georgian Revival with Prairie School details. The use of Prairie School elements is uncommon in Chadron and Crawford, the two largest cities in the county. However, Chadron has two outstanding examples of the Georgian Revival style in the U.S. Post Office and the Kenwood School. The Library (Media Center) is a fine example of the Carnegie-type library in form and has classical details, a typical feature of libraries of this period. The red tile roof, stone cornice, center pavilion with columns and pediment, and good proportions create a pleasant, classical building, one of the best in Chadron and the area, and more classical in detail than the earlier (1911) Chadron Carnegie Library.

The most significant of the buildings, architecturally, are the 1930's dormitories, Women's Hall and Crites Hall. Their Art Deco details are unusual in the state, where few have been identified to date. Their type of Art Deco is a classically formed building with Art Deco details, which is described well by Architectural Historian David Gebhard:

"By the end of the twenties the Art Deco emerged as a favored image for these [small businesses] and other smaller-scaled buildings. Most of them were sheathed in traditional brick with just the right amount of decorative terracotta ornament. Their plans and elevations were almost always symmetrical. The walls were vertically articulated by projecting piers which often extended above the parapet of the building."²

The dormitories closely reflect this type: brick walls, vertically projecting piers, and decorative ornament, although in this case it is not of terracotta. The question of the Art Deco in Nebraska has not been addressed in previous National Register nominations. Gebhard stresses the middle class nature and general acceptance of the Art Deco, but few products have been identified in the Nebraska Historic Building Survey to date. With this in mind, the Chadron dormitories assume a greater importance.

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Architect Gordon Shattuck appears to be a particular advocate of the Art Deco or Moderne in Nebraska. Although the two dormitories are attributed to different architects, they are from the same firm. Shattuck had been working as a draftsman in the firm of Arthur D. Baker for five years at the time of the design of Women's Hall, and most probably contributed a great deal to the design. After Baker's death in 1933, Shattuck took charge of the firm. The two dormitories have so many common elements that Shattuck's considerable involvement seems likely. The later building also uses more Art Deco details. Further evidence of his contribution is the similarity of the Women's Hall entrance with that of the Grand Island City Hall, which Shattuck designed. Both have curved reeding flanking the door and the building's name incised in the lintel.

The selection of these five buildings is based on the history of the building construction at Chadron State College. The first construction period occurred from the school's beginning in 1910 until 1938. Seven buildings were erected in that time; the five with integrity are nominated here. For fifteen years (1938-1952) no buildings were erected on the campus. The second construction phase was from 1952 to 1972, when sixteen buildings were erected. Based on the fifteen-year intermediary period, it was necessary to include Crites Hall (1938) in the earlier period. Crites Hall also stylistically matches the first construction phase with its similarity to the 1932 Women's Hall.

¹R. McLaran Sawyer, "No Teacher for The School: The Nebraska Junior Normal School Movement," Nebraska History 52:2 (Summer, 1971), pp. 191-203.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property NA

Quadrangle name Chadron East and Chadron West, NE

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	3
Zone	

6	6	3	5	0	0
Easting					

4	7	4	2	5	1	0
Northing						

B

1	3
Zone	

6	6	3	5	0	0
Easting					

4	7	4	2	4	5	0
Northing						

C

1	3
Zone	

6	6	3	3	2	0
Easting					

4	7	4	2	5	5	0
Northing						

D

1	3
Zone	

6	6	3	3	3	0
Easting					

4	7	4	2	6	0	0
Northing						

E

1	3
Zone	

6	6	3	4	7	0
Easting					

4	7	4	2	5	8	0
Northing						

F

Zone	

Easting					

Northing						

G

Zone	

Easting					

Northing						

H

Zone	

Easting					

Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification

See Number 7

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
NA			

state	code	county	code
NA			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Penelope Chatfield Sodhi, Preservation Historian

organization Nebraska State Historical Society

date January, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 82554

telephone 402/471-3850

city or town Lincoln

state Nebraska

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Marion W. Knott

5/11/83

title Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

date

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

See Continuation sheet for listing date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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_____, November 9, 1950, p. 7, Edna Work obituary.

_____, November 12, 1953, p. 1, Edwin D. Crites obituary.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Chadron State College Historic Buildings Thematic Resource
State Nebraska

Nomination/Type of Review	Entered in the National Register	Date/Signature
1. Sparks Hall	Keeper <i>for</i>	<i>Melvin Byers</i> 9/8/83
	Attest	
2. Miller Hall	Substantive Review	Keeper <i>Beth Grovann</i> 9/8/83
	Attest	
3. Library	Entered in the National Register	Keeper <i>Melvin Byers</i> 9/8/83
	Attest	
4. Crites Hall	Substantive Review	Keeper <i>Beth Grovann</i> 9/8/83
	Attest	
5. Work, Edna, Hall	Entered in the National Register	Keeper <i>Melvin Byers</i> 9/8/83
	Attest	
6.	Keeper	
	Attest	
7.	Keeper	
	Attest	
8.	Keeper	
	Attest	
9.	Keeper	
	Attest	
10.	Keeper	
	Attest	